



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:  
CONTACT:

Tuesday, May 3, 2016  
Patrick Riccards (@Eduflack)  
[riccards@woodrow.org](mailto:riccards@woodrow.org) | (703) 298-8283

### RELATIONSHIPS CENTRAL TO TEACHER SUCCESS, EDUCATORS SAY

#### ***New Report Spotlights Stories of Motivation, Support of Annenberg-Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows as They Move from Teacher Education to Classroom Success***

PRINCETON, N.J. (May 3, 2016) –As part of National Teacher Appreciation Day, with communities across the United States recognizing educators’ contributions, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation today released a new report, *What Made Me the Teacher I Am Today?* The collection of essays by these early-career teachers examines the lessons that the Foundation’s Leonore Annenberg-Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows learned on their journeys from aspiring educators to successful classroom teachers.

“Successful teaching doesn’t happen in isolation, as these teachers’ perspectives make plain,” said Stephanie J. Hull, executive vice president and chief operating officer at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. “It is the result of a wide range of interconnected relationships—relationships with parents, with other teachers, with mentors, with communities, even with the very subject matter the educator teaches. *What Made Me the Teacher I Am Today* provides, in the teachers’ own words, a clear vision of what inspired them to teach and how relationships have contributed to their successes to date.”

The report offers a series of short essays from 18 teachers, each reflecting on what inspired and guided them into the teaching profession. Some of the highlights include:

- “I’ve come to realize that my learning process in the classroom actually feels a whole lot like the science I practiced at the bench: engineering experimental procedures, collecting and analyzing data, and formulating questions about next steps. It turns out that my scientific worldview can really improve learning outcomes for my students,” said Kristin Milks, a biology and earth science teacher in Bloomington, IN, who enrolled in a teacher preparation program shortly after completing her Ph.D. in biochemistry.
- “What transforms someone from being a good teacher to being a great teacher is the passion to make connections with students, to constantly evaluate and adjust their practice to do what is in the students’ best interest,” said Catherine Ann Haney, a Virginia Spanish teacher who has recently been teaching in Santiago, Chile.
- “Enrolling in a teacher education program, instead of starting my career as a teacher first and then obtaining my master’s degree after, meant I had a cohort of other soon-to-be teachers to learn with as we persevered through a very rigorous and demanding year,” said Jeremy Cress, a math teacher in Philadelphia.

- “I realized that being a good math teacher does not mean explaining clearly, making kids like me, or making math fun. Rather, it means giving students the opportunity to solve problems by themselves from start to finish, to struggle and persevere, and to learn from each other’s particular strengths,” said Brittany Leknes, a math teacher from Sunnyvale, CA.
- “Together my students and I co-create their identities, their sense of themselves, and their understanding of their place in society. Because I believe wholly in my students’ own power, I teach to disrupt school cultures that suggest that students need to be anything less than their whole selves,” said Kayla Vinson, who taught social studies in the Harlem Children’s Zone.

Created in 2007, the Leonore Annenberg-Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship was designed to serve as the equivalent of a national “Rhodes Scholarship” for teaching. Working with Stanford University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation provided \$30,000 stipends for exceptionally able candidates to complete a yearlong master’s degree program. In exchange, the teacher candidates agreed to teach for three years in high-need secondary schools across the country.

The Leonore Annenberg Teaching Fellowship was funded through grants from the Annenberg Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York. It served as the basis for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation’s successful Teaching Fellowship program, which now operates in five states (Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio), operating in partnership with 28 universities. Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows complete a rigorous yearlong master’s degree program, coupled with a robust yearlong clinical experience. Once they earn their degrees, Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows teach in high-need STEM classrooms, while receiving three years of coaching and mentoring.

“In listening to these educators, we repeatedly heard the importance of relationships with students, mentors both during and after a university teacher preparation program, and peers as key relationships that contributed to educator success,” said James W. Fraser, professor of history and education and chair of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Professions at New York University’s Steinhardt School. “The impact of these engagements was further strengthened by lifelong relationships with family, other teachers, and the academic content these educators found most compelling.”

The full *What Made Me the Teacher I Am Today? A Reflection by Selected Leonore Annenberg-Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows* can be found here <http://woodrow.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WW-Annenberg-perspectives.pdf>. Hull, Fraser (former senior vice president for programs at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation), and Beverly Sanford, vice president at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, edited the collection.

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#### **About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation**

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation ([www.woodrow.org](http://www.woodrow.org)) identifies and develops the nation’s best minds to meet its most critical challenges. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.